SuperScout

Bessie Higgenbottom doesn't care about boys or being a princess. She wants to be a superhero.

a cartoon series
created by Amy Poehler, Cynthia True & Erik Wiese

SuperScout

Contents

Overview

Characters

Honeybee Lore

Style & Design

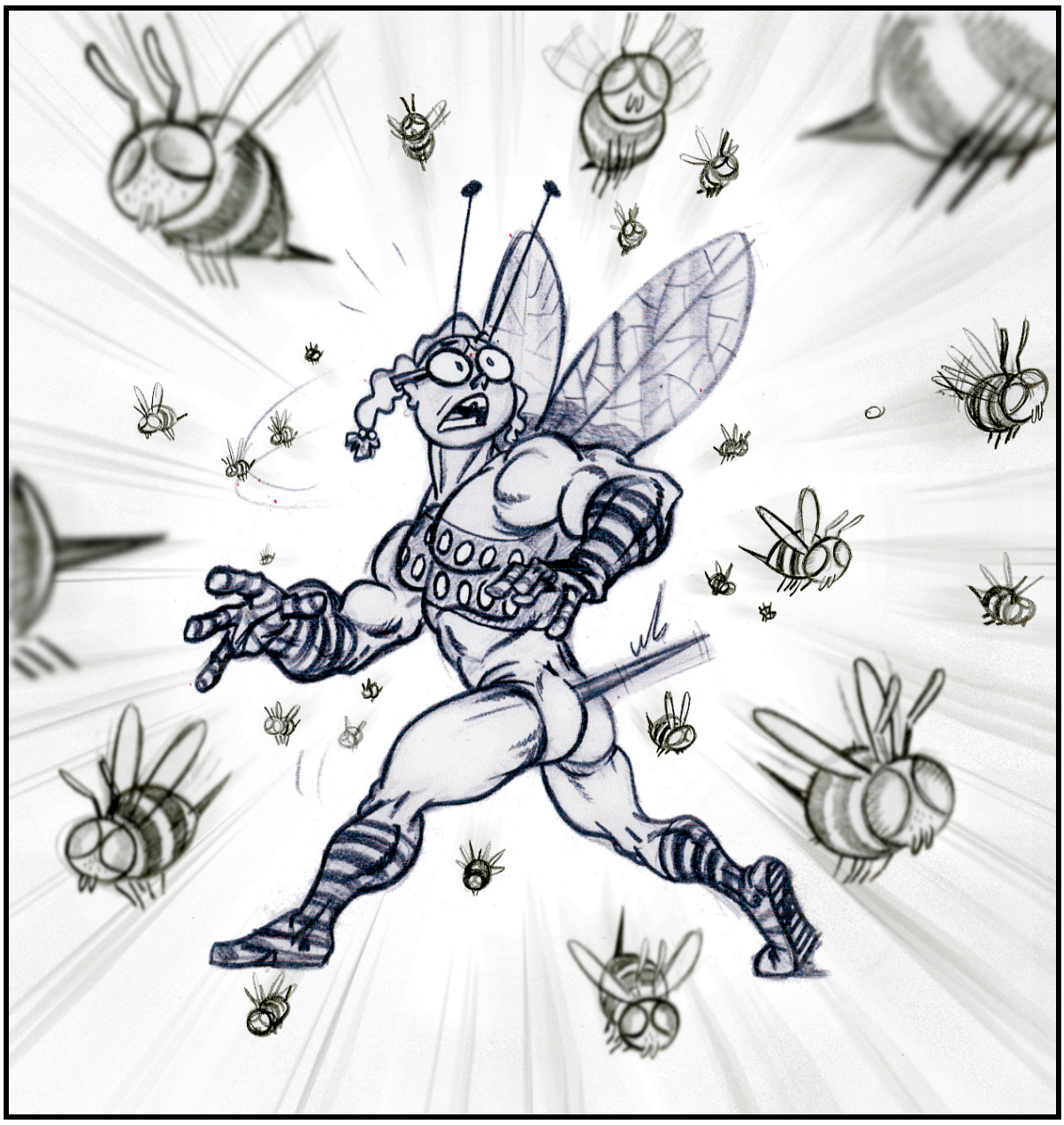
Episode Ideas

Creator Bios

Overview

SuperScout is a cartoon comedy about the adventures of the world's most ambitious scout, a hyperactive eight year-old named Bessie Higgenbottom. As a member of the Honeybees (a fictitious scout order like Campfire Girls or Bluebirds), Bessie leads her troop with zeal General Patton would have admired and has earned more badges than any Honeybee in history. But a bunch of badges still elude her, and Bessie's not stopping until she has every single last one.

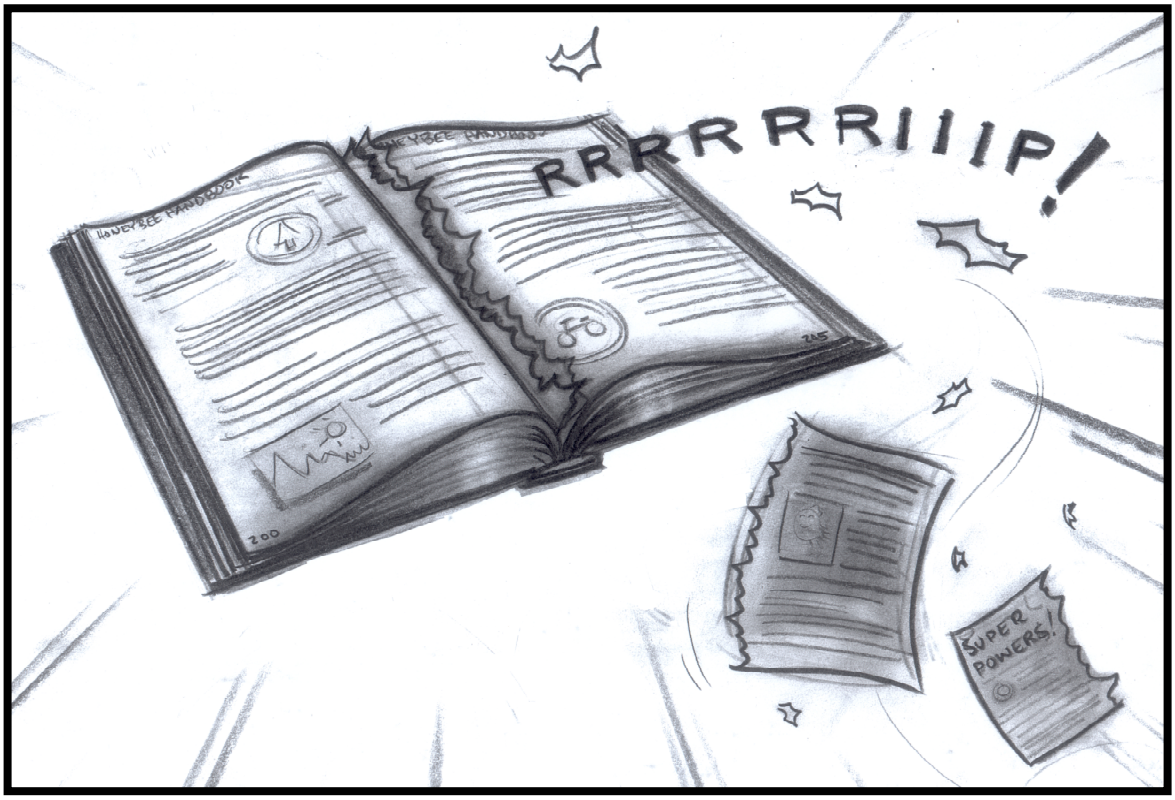
That's because, according to ancient Honeybee lore, the girl who earns all the Bee Badges (there are hundreds) will be instantly zapped with incredible superhero powers and turn into...



THE MIGHTY BEE! No girl has ever pulled this off before and modern Honeybees are either unaware of this now-obscure legend or dismiss it as an old wives' tale.

As Bessie's rival Honeybee Portia Gibbons (prissy daughter of the prissy troop leader) constantly points out, there's not a single word about it in the Honeybee Handbook.

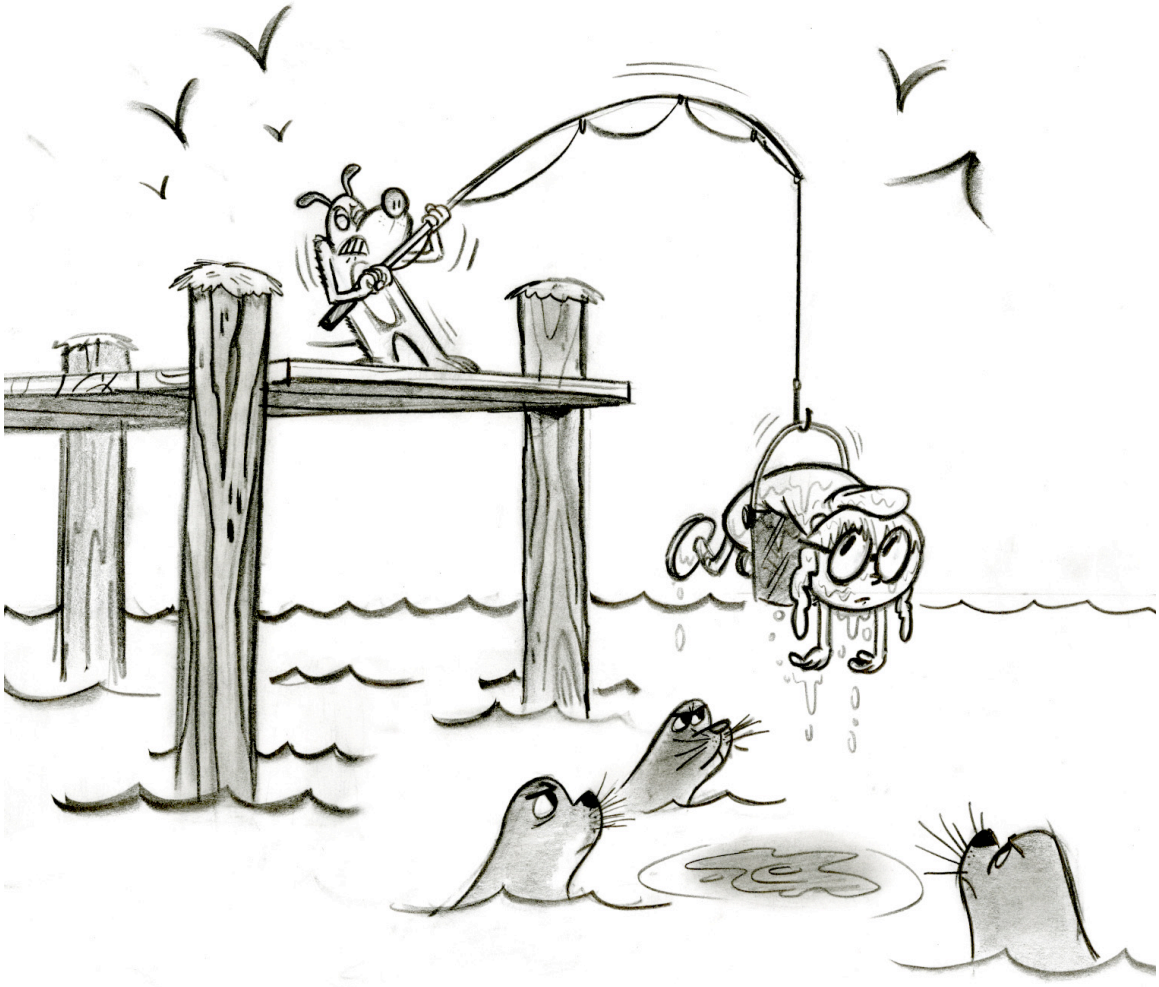
Or is there?



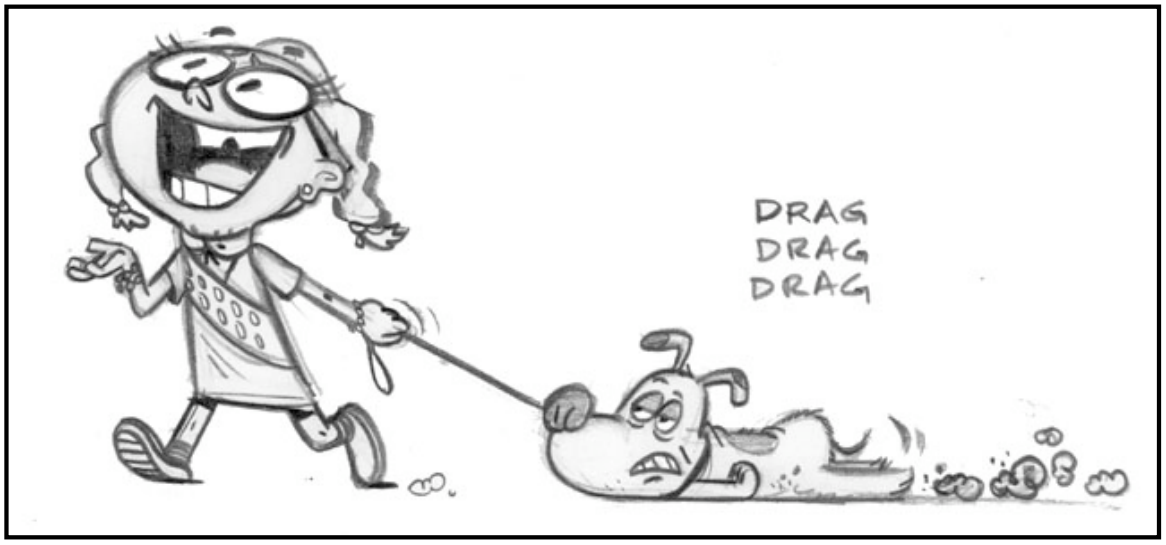
But who cares what the other kids say? Bessie's not about to be dissuaded from her belief in the legend of The Mighty Bee since none other than the founder of the Honeybees, the late Miriam Breedlove, told her all about it.

And so with her enthusiastic six year-old brother Benjamin Higgenbottom (aka SuperSidekick) and best Bee friend Nisa Nehru in tow, Bessie sets out in many episodes to earn yet another Bee Badge. But even when she's not on a Badge mission per se, Bessie, like any superhero in training, is always looking for ways to do a little worldly good.

And she thinks big. Take, for example, Bee Badge #428: Animal Rescue. Bessie didn't just play with animals at a shelter or help find a neighbor's pet as the Honeybee Handbook recommended, she went all the way down to Fisherman's Wharf to look for an animal to take back from the edge. After a couple of elaborate efforts to rescue a 'homeless' seal from a rock, Bessie fell in the water and ended up being saved herself by a scruffy dog without tags. She slipped a collar over his neck in gratitude, dubbed him "Happy!" and dragged him home.



What Bessie didn't stop to consider was that the dog she named Happy had no desire whatsoever to be adopted. But thanks to Bessie's best intentions, Happy is now living the conventional life he tried so hard to avoid.



In this episode, and all others, the comedy is rooted in Bessie's warped sense of goodwill, her freakish level of commitment to Bee excellence, and her frenzied efforts to face down her naysayers and soldier on.

Characters

Bessie Higgenbottom, known, thanks to her lisp, as "Bethie" to everyone except her mother and brother, is eight years old and she is the most dedicated Honeybee in the whole world. Bessie wears her uniform every single day, can weave a 60-foot lanyard in under 20 seconds and built herself an elaborate fort (The Hive) out of popsicle sticks and macaroni. She has more Badges than any Bee ever, and every year when the Bees sell boxes of taffy, she breaks her own sales record.

What does she want?
Like all of us, Bessie wants to be special. But while some little girls dream of being a movie star or a princess bride, Bessie wants to be a superhero someday. Even more importantly, as a virtual disciple of the Honeybee Handbook and its Code of Honor, she just wants to help her fellow human. Whether the fellow human has asked her to or not.

What is her attitude?

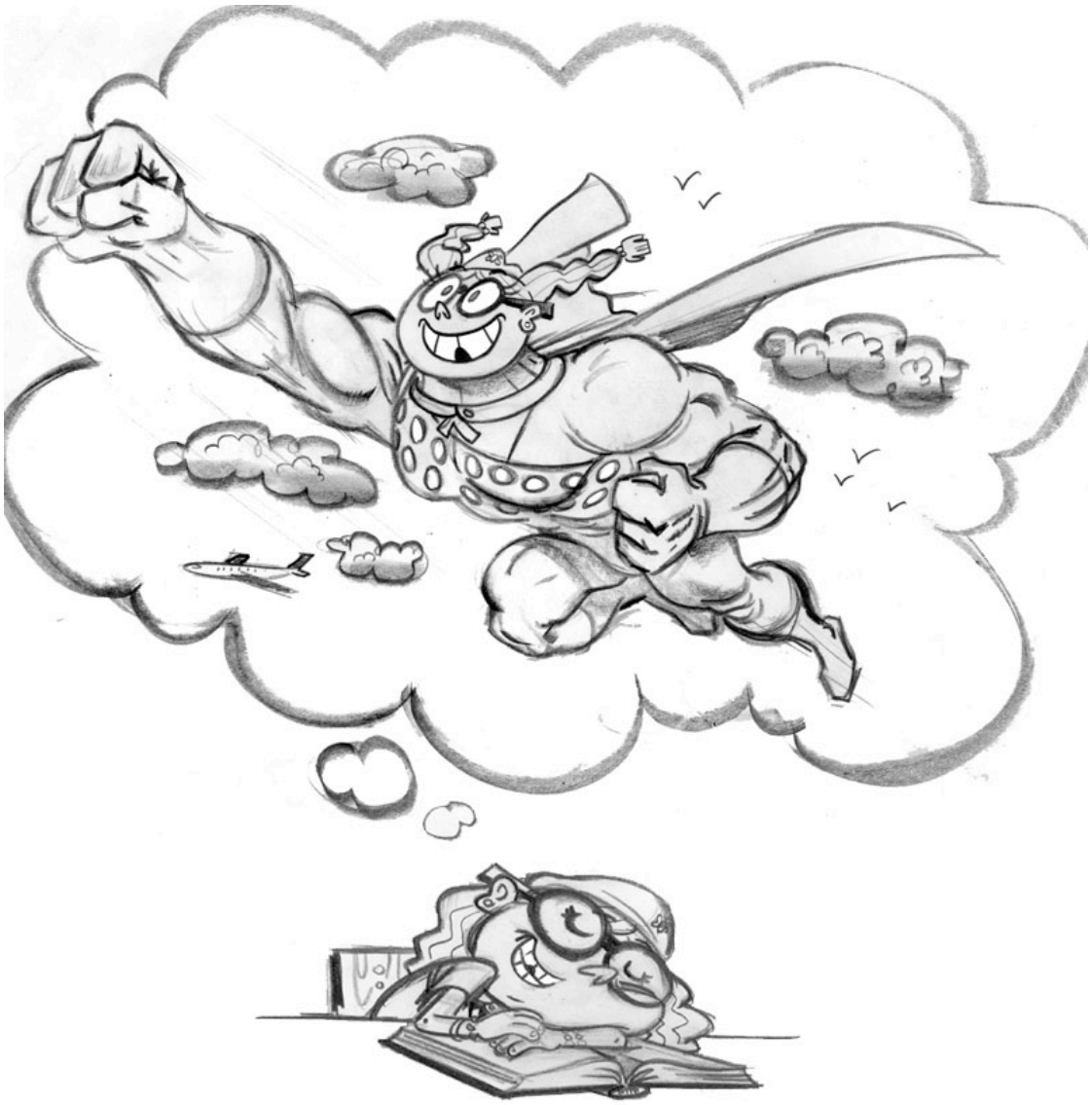
Bessie's got a "can-do" attitude taken to a comic extreme. She's a big-hearted innocent, an unwavering optimist who approaches every situation, no matter how risky, with earnest and brave enthusiasm.

Her confidence and drive are both her best and worst attributes, getting her into jams as often as they rescue her. Bessie is extremely friendly (viewing everyone as a potential Honeybee recruit), if a little bossy, and though she is laser-focused on her goal of superheroedom, she never gets malicious or mean about it. (And though she's a bit hyper, she's never shrill.) Bessie has, however, been known to lose it on occasion when her considerable efforts are frustrated (and these manic tears, exploited with hilarious animation, are one of the funniest things about her). If most other kids see her as a geek, or don't understand her, Bessie easily shrugs it off, relying on her little brother, and her best friends Nisa and Finger. After all, no one said becoming a

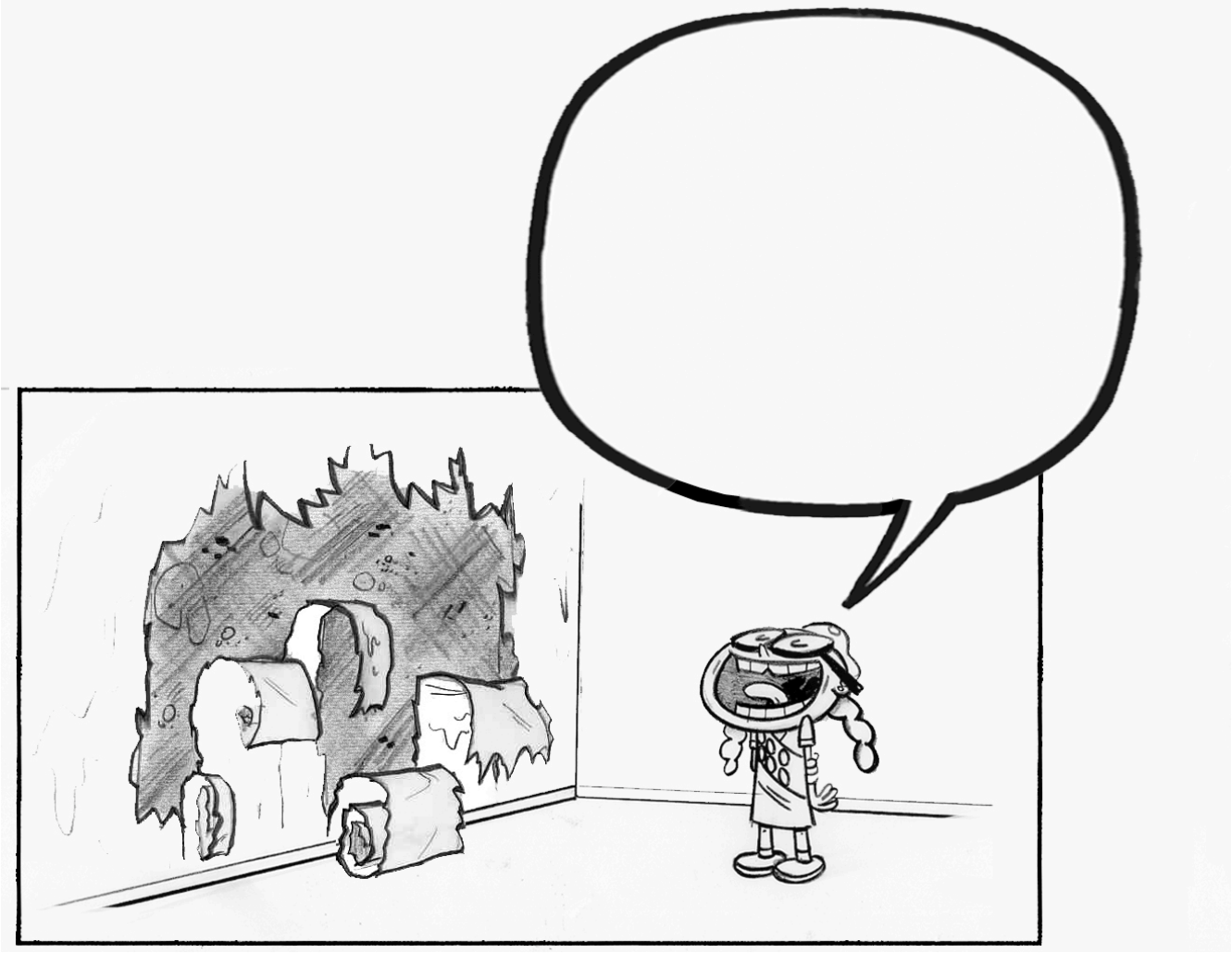
superhero would be easy and Honeybees are very hard workers.

What's funny about Bessie?
Bessie's obsessive commitment to living up to the Honeybee Code of Honor and earning every Bee Badge in the most superheroic way possible, even when it's totally unnecessary, is her comic pathos.

Not only will she go to great lengths to do a good deed, she often bestows them on rather unwilling recipients, whether it's helping an elder cross the street at the wrong moment or performing the Heimlich maneuver on someone who's not choking.



Bessie constantly dreams about her future as a superhero and her frantic recounting of those fantasies are sometimes part of the show. She's all arms and legs and thinks she can do and be anything (in addition to being the Mighty Bee, of course), which engenders in her an endearing but comical bravery that is way out of proportion with her actual skills.

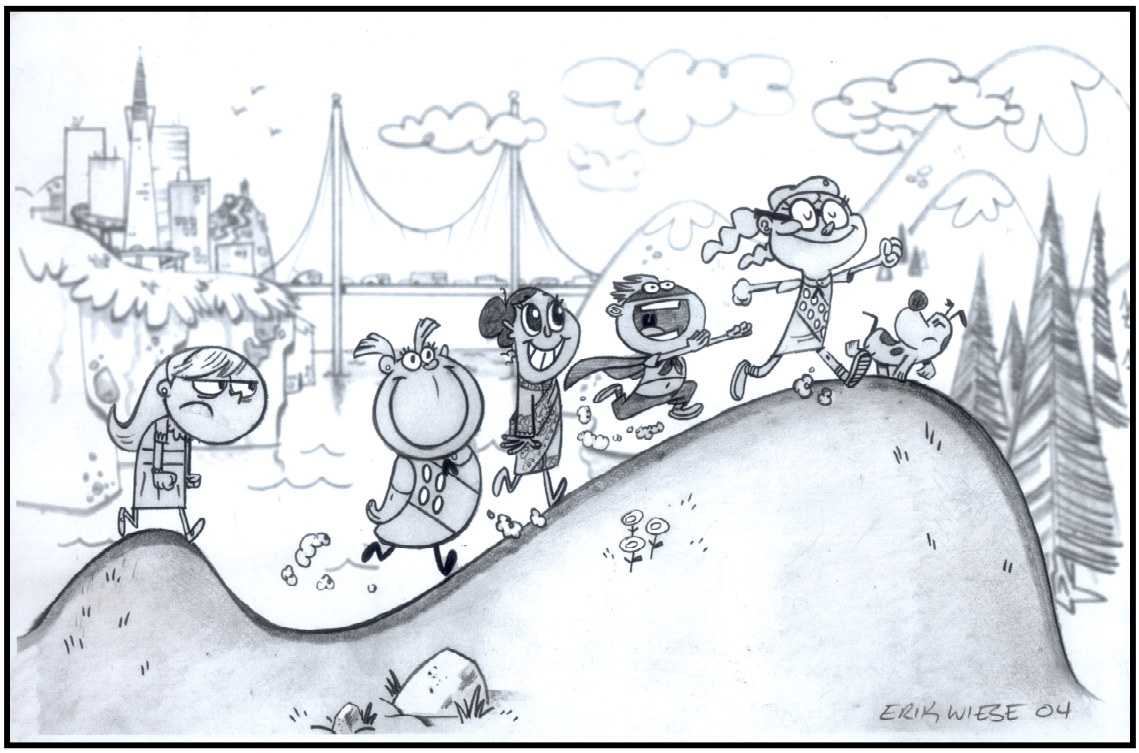


Bessie can talk the paint off a wall. She loves canned ham. It is the perfect on-the-go superhero food!

What makes Bessie different?

Bessie is highly independent and, for once, our heroine is obsessed about something other than a boy. In fact, the neighborhood heartthrob Rocky Rhodes is madly in love with her (probably because she is the one girl who is aloof to his charms) but she constantly gently reminds him that her Honeybee career comes first. Sure, she's got a little crush on him, but future superheroes can't afford to spend too much time on boys.

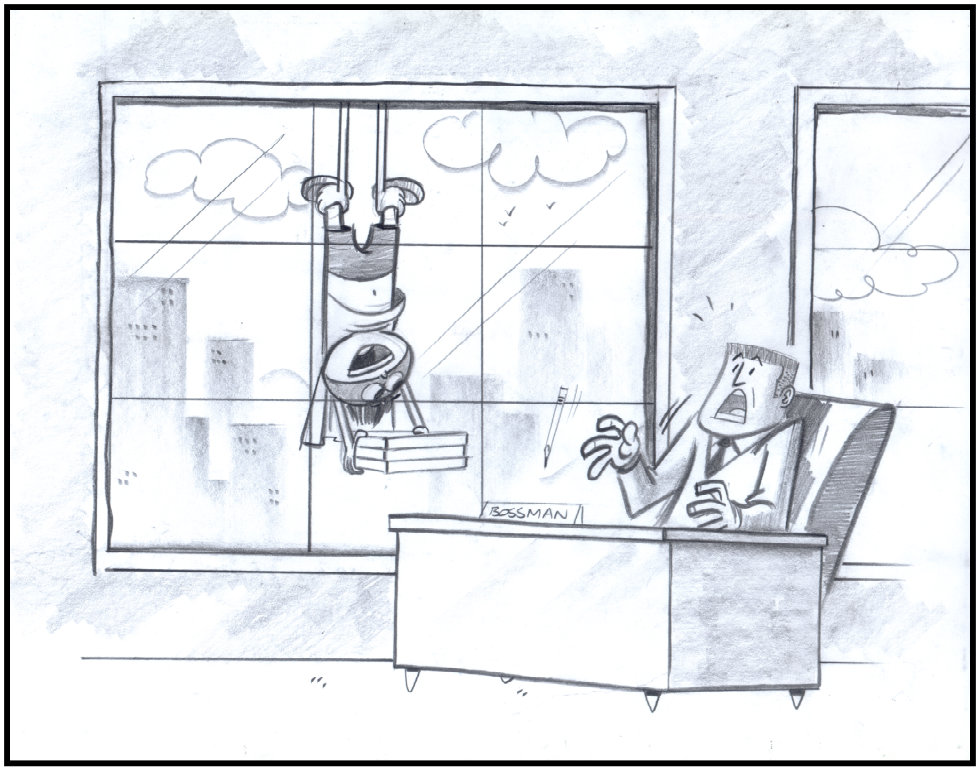
What makes Bessie likeable and relatable?
All of us, especially children, can easily relate to being incredibly passionate about something, and Bessie is the funny and admirable extreme of dedication to one's dream. She's quite simply unstoppable, does things her own, if inadvisable, way, and even when she's actually screwed things up, she almost always sees a completed mission as a big win, blissfully unaware of the havoc she's created.



It's easy to laugh at Bessie but the truth is she does possess a superpower: Strength of purpose that is astounding and inspiring.

BENJAMIN HIGGENBOTTOM is Bessie's six year-old brother, the only other person in Bessie's life who wholly believes in the myth of the Mighty Bee. (No big surprise since Bessie has been feeding him the lore since he was two.) Ben also believes that when Bessie completes every badge and becomes a superhero she will be able to confer SuperSidekick status on anyone she deems worthy. If Ben plays his cards right, it could be him.

So exciting is this notion that he tags along with Bessie on most of her crazy badge missions, and wears a half-baked superhero costume, with a bath towel cape and black Lone Ranger eye mask.



The only thing is, for a future superhero, he scares easy and is unusually clumsy. But Ben is also a real boy's boy who would die a thousand deaths if it ever got out that he's an "honorary Honeybee." As it is, he has to put up with his best friend Chuck Corn giving him grief over his costume. (Ben claims it's in ode to an awesome comic book hero whom he refuses to reveal.) And often when Bessie pushes him too hard, or his Mom tries to baby him too much, he rebels. But he's not quite as cunning as his big sister and can usually be talked into whatever it is that Bessie wants. But then, who can't?

NISA NEHRU is an eight year-old Indian immigrant, the only child of a doctor and his wife, who have just arrived in San Francisco and live in the other half of the Higgenbottom's duplex. In the tradition of Latke or Long Duck Dong (Sixteen Candles, yo!), Nisa is the little girl version of the wide-eyed newcomer, a stranger in a strange land who has a very funny way of getting things all mixed up. But who can blame her? It's one thing trying to find your way in a new country, quite another to have Bessie Higgenbottom as your tour guide. Bessie declared she and Nisa "best Bee friends" right after she recruited Nisa to the troop her very first day here. (Bessie swore it was the coolest thing you could do in America, thereby forever ruining Nisa's chance to infiltrate the popular crowd.) Nisa clings to Bessie, but is a little overwhelmed by her, catching only about half of what comes rushing out of Bessie's mouth. In fact, some of the comedy between these two has to do with Nisa's often absurd interpretations of what Bessie is chattering about. Bessie absolutely adores Nisa but can be a tad bossy and possessive with her friend. Nisa can be surprisingly strong-willed though, and Bessie's rival Portia Gibbons is hugely irritated that, for the first time ever, Bessie has a loyal ally in the troop whom she can't seem to scare off.

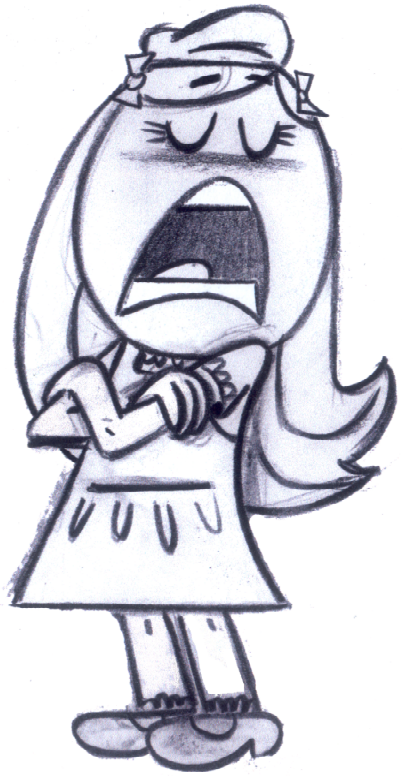
HAPPY HIGGENBOTTOM was a nameless dog with a torn ear enjoying a freewheeling bohemian existence down at the Wharf when along came Bessie Higgenbottom to save him from his carefree life. Happy could run away from the Higgenbottoms, but he is a total slacker and on the rare occasion he does get the urge to make a break for it, Bessie has a way of producing these incredibly delicious biscuits to which he is hopelessly addicted. Happy can't talk, but his highly expressive face is enough to give him up as the wry and cynical lazy lump to Bessie's optimistic overachiever. He has to be literally dragged on badge missions and he couldn't care less about helping anybody. He has developed a grudging affection for Bessie, however, and often will lend a paw if it means her triumphing over arrogant Portia and her perfect ears. Happy finds Ben annoying—the kid's constant attempts to roughhouse with him are excruciating.

HILARY HIGGENBOTTOM is Bessie and Ben's slightly eccentric mother who plays piano and sings at the Chancellor Hotel. She is a loving, upbeat, easygoing, but perpetually distracted single mom who has her hands full with her two kids and her own dreams. Hilary also thinks of herself as a fabulous cook and she's most often found in the kitchen cooking up exotic meals her kids try their best not to eat. Truth is, she's the only truly bad meal you'll get in San Francisco. Oh well. She's very supportive of Bessie's ambitions, though she's a little vague on the whole Mighty Bee thing. Bessie tells so *many* stories. Hilary occasionally tries to rein Bessie in a bit, but she is just as bowled over by her as everyone else and often says 'yes' to Bessie's torrent of requests out of sheer exhaustion. The one thing she can't get used to is her beautiful little girl only wanting to wear her drab Honeybee uniform every single day.

FINGER is Bessie's "closest" friend. He is her left index finger and she tells him everything. He doesn't talk back, of course, but Bessie can read his responses by the way he moves and she reacts to him as if everything were a two-way conversation. Every morning when she wakes she draws a smiley face on Finger and before bed, she washes off his "awake" face and draws on his "asleep" face. For all intents and purposes, Finger is just an imaginary friend but there are occasional moments when he appears to have a will of his own and, like Ben, defies Bessie. At such times, he simply goes limp, refusing to move or help her in any way. That can be pretty frustrating for Bessie—it's not easy to safety proof the whole city, for example, when you're out a whole Finger.

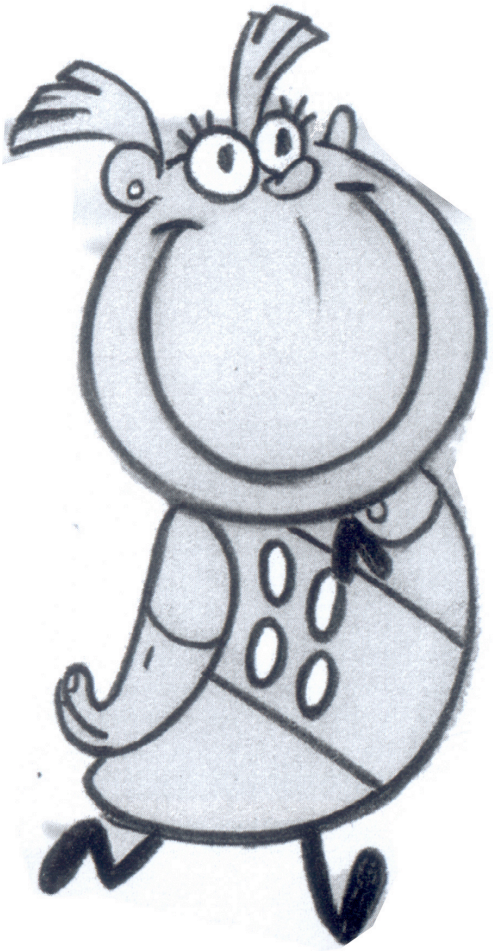
CHUCK CORN is Ben's proudly nerdy best friend. Chuck has a very healthy ego for a smallish eight year-old who can't catch a ball to save his life. He talks loudly and carries a big light saber. In most ways, he's the alpha in the relationship, but he can't drag Ben away from his superhero obsession. It's not that the costume really strikes Chuck as all that weird (see: light saber), it's just that he's picked up on Ben's sensitivity about the matter and enjoys the response his teasing gets. But the truth is, Chuck has a secret of his own: He has a big bad crush on Bessie and, even while giving Ben a hard time, he not-so-subtly tries to find ways to hang out at the Hive with her. Bessie is completely oblivious to his feelings but is always happy to have an extra helper at the Hive. Like Ben, he often finds himself doing stuff for Bessie he can't really remember saying yes to. Ben, meanwhile, would much prefer to hang out with Chuck without Bessie because that's when Chuck drops the macho act and they get along great, geeking out together for hours over Chuck's vast collection of action figures.

The Other Honeybees



PORTIA GIBBONS is Bessie's arch rival Honeybee, the pretty, smart girl who is used to being the star in the room. She doesn't believe in all that stupid superhero stuff Bessie is always yammering about, but she does believe in winning. In truth, she probably wouldn't care that much about the dorky Honeybees if Bessie hadn't throw down the gauntlet. But it's harder to beat Bessie than Portia likes to admit, mostly because Portia is the laziest girl in the whole world. She yawns between every sentence and her favorite pastime is perching on her canopy bed and making her adoring sidekick Penny do her bidding. Portia is a born party pooper and loves to shoot down Bessie's every idea. Everything is just so stupid. And exhausting.

MARY FRANCES GIBBONS is the butter-wouldn't-melt Honeybee troop leader and mother of Portia. A consummate control freak who seems to have leapt from the pages of *House & Garden*, Mary Frances has no use for the ridiculous Honeybee lore that Bessie insists on believing in, and she has lots of prissy rules that seem to exist solely to eliminate fun. But none of that stops Bessie from adoring her troop leader. On the contrary, Bessie is hugely impressed by Mary Frances's perfectionist ways and demands constant attention from her. Mary Frances, in turn, is forced to be perfectly "nice" to Bessie on the surface—she is wildly appropriate in everything she does—but underneath she can't stand Bessie and her bull-in-a-china-shop ways. And Mary Frances certainly isn't above, say, secretly lobbying Honeybee Headquarters to create five new badges when Bessie speed-completes a few. It's not that Mary Frances believes in any of this superhero nonsense, but her little Portia would be just crushed if Bessie actually got all the badges and she can't have that. What's the point of being troop leader if your own daughter can't benefit? Plus, it's not like Bessie's mom puts any time in to the troop—unless you count her store-bought cupcakes. Which Mary Frances does not!!



PENNY is the not terribly bright—okay, kind of dumb—lady-in-waiting to Portia. She herself bears no ill will toward Bessie, but she lives to serve Portia and often helps launch schemes against Bessie. But Penny is also a very nervous type, worried about what everybody thinks, and her need to please often causes her to slip up and ruin Portia's best-laid plans. She simply can't keep a secret. Penny eats too much taffy.

MIRIAM BREEDLOVE, the founder of Honeybees, passed on twenty years ago, but she occasionally visits Bessie in her dreams, gives her advice, and discusses with her the secret lore that is no longer in current Honeybee Handbooks. Miriam is a fun-loving sassy Auntie Mame type and can't stand how prissy and boring the Honeybees have become. That Mary Frances Gibbons has to go. Bessie keeps a shrine to Miriam, made out of taffy boxes, an old photo and a beeswax candle.

Honeybee Info and Lore

The Honeybees were founded by one Miriam Breedlove in 1939. Bessie chose to join the Honeybees because "honeybees are very hard workers, plus they command respect." The Honeybees sell taffy instead of cookies.

The HONEYBEE HANDBOOK is a giant manual containing Honeybee history, the Code of Honor, rules and badge mission instructions. Bessie refers to hers constantly, even though she knows it is not exactly a complete handbook. Like all current Honeybee Handbooks, it's missing a few pages. Pages 202-206 to be exact.

That's right. According to today's Honeybee leadership, the missing pages were full of outdated information on turning Honeybees into future homemakers and so, in keeping with modern ideals, those pages were ripped out. But Bessie knows better.

She has been told by Miriam Breedlove that the missing pages actually contain lore about the superhero powers that would be bestowed on any Honeybee who earned every single badge. According to Breedlove, current Honeybee leadership (led by Mrs. Gibbons) considered this Mighty Bee stuff a ridiculous old wives' tale and an embarrassment, and so had the story "edited" out. Bessie, naturally, would love to find those missing pages (and maybe she will in a big SuperScout movie!) but she herself requires no proof. She believes with all her heart in every word that Miss Breedlove has told her.

Style & Design

THE LOOK

SuperScout is a classic cartoon show, reminiscent of Max Fleischer's *Popeye,* and Bob Clampett's *Bugs Bunny* with their broad, colorful characters and rubberhose animation, allowing us to exploit the medium for a laugh at any given moment. Everything is game. But unlike Looney Toons where characters were routinely unscathed by a high fall, Bessie and her friends have more physical vulnerability, as in *SpongeBob* or *Dexter's Laboratory*. It's a cartoony cartoon with enough borders to keep a sense of jeopardy.

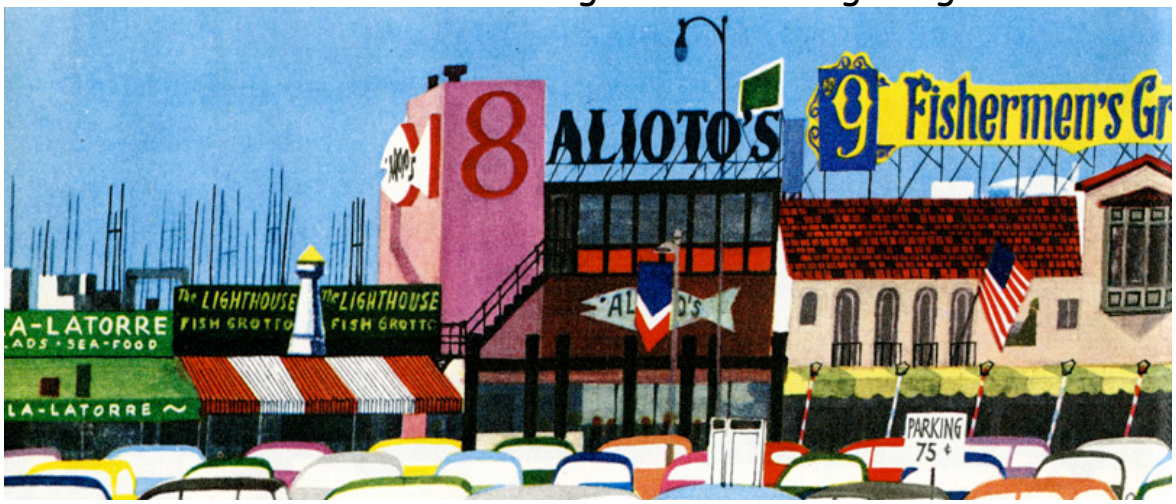
The characters are drawn in a classic three-dimensional style a la *Spongebob* or *Popeye* (as opposed to a flat two-dimensional style like *The Fairly OddParents* or *Dexter's Laboratory*.) The hand-painted backgrounds, a harmonious balance of warm and cool colors, are satires of real life environments.

SETTING

SuperScout is set in San Francisco, the better to provide an endless variety of fascinating locales for Bessie's adventures: Fisherman's Wharf, Chinatown, the Redwood Forest, even Alcatraz!

**Illustrations by M.Sasek.*

The city is not only a welcome break from the Anytown, USA featured in many cartoon comedies, it lends itself to deeply hued animation and by design allows for a suspension of disbelief. Plus, San Francisco is an urban playground of international renown, perfect for supervillains, world leaders, movie stars and royalty to flit in and out very naturally. These are the sorts of people Bessie often finds herself running into on her big badge missions.



(Inspiration Art) Illustration by M.Sasek

While set in present day San Francisco, this is a thoroughly cartoonish universe where anything can happen, following in the tradition of classic cartoon worlds like Bikini Bottom or Bedrock.

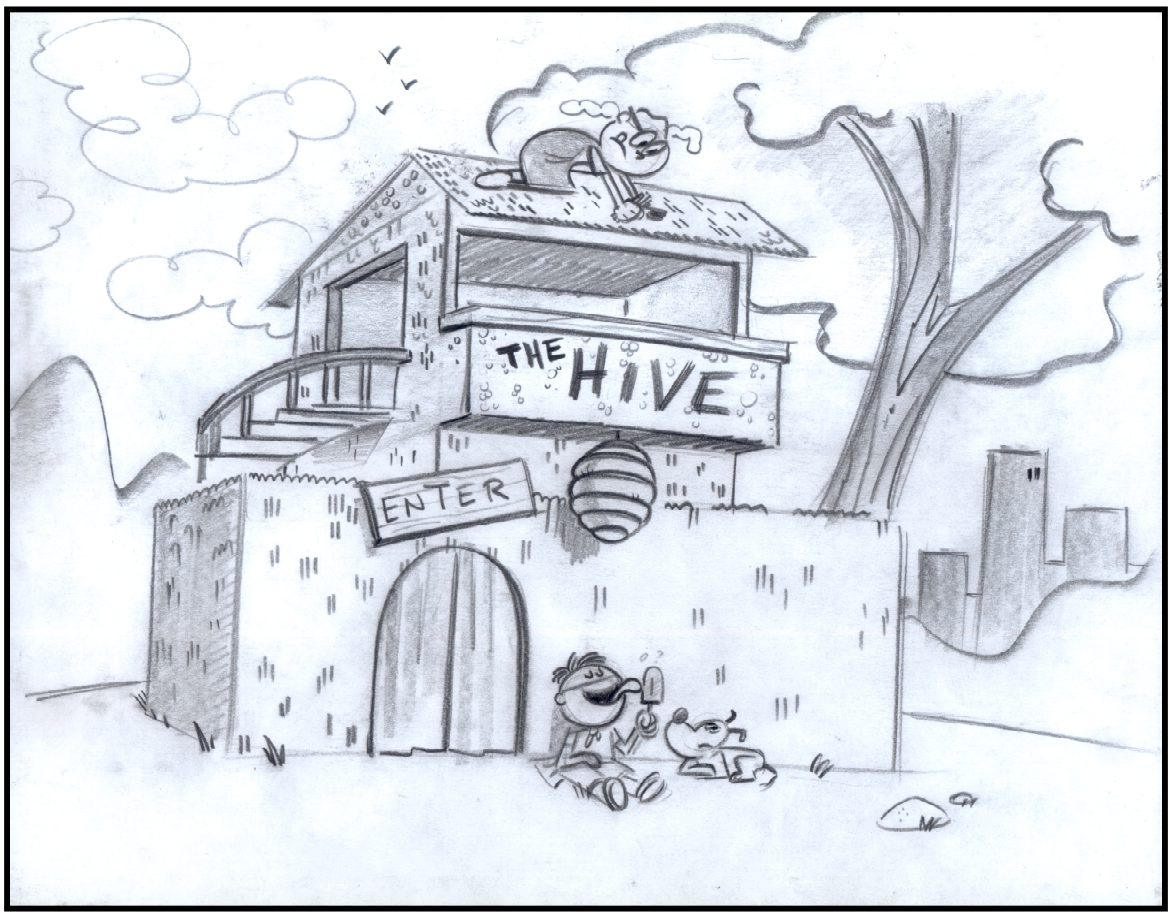
MAIN LOCATIONS

While Bessie's adventures take her all over the place, episodes will be anchored by four main locations, centered around a fifth: A fictional City Park, much like Golden Gate, with all kinds of secret gardens and hidden coves within it.

The Higgenbottom's House The Higgenbottom family lives in a charming but modest duplex on the edge of the Park. It's an eclectic environment that reflects Hilary's rather laissez faire attitude toward housekeeping and the creativity and imagination of the whole family. Bessie's bedroom is the only pin-neat room in the whole house. Bessie hearts structure.

Nisa's House The other half of the duplex belongs to Nisa's family, which though more orderly than the Higgenbottom's, has its own flair and endless exotic curios. Bessie loves to eat dinner over at the Nehru's, but usually brings her own food: Canned ham, with a side of peas. (Bessie's curiosity does not extend to her palate.)

[Art for all locations to come.]



The Hive Bessie's fort, which she built herself with Ben and Finger's help, is in the middle of the park and functions as a kids-only hangout for Bessie and her little gang.

The Rec Center Also in the park is a City Recreation Center, where all the neighborhood kids gather. Mary Frances Gibbons runs the show around the Rec, and it's where Honeybee troop meetings are held.

Episode Ideas

Ambassador Embarassador

Bessie's mom is having a sidewalk sale in front of their duplex in an effort to get rid of a few of her endless weird collectibles and Bessie holds an auction on the stoop, trying to drive up the price on a 1981 hair dryer with a missing switch. "Do I hear 35 cents?" Portia and Penny, there to browse, snicker at her. Portia: "Who would want to buy that? It's probably got your mom's old hair stuck in it. You're a weirdo, Bessie Higgenbottom." Her two fellow Bees flounce off and Bessie looks very lonely. But then she spots a small raised hand and hears a voice. "You do hear 35 cents please!" Standing before her, ready to collect her antique, is a little girl wearing a sari. "Hey! Who are you??" Bessie shouts. "My name is Nisa," she replies. She's from India and her family's moving into the Higgenbottom's duplex. The new neighbors! Bessie's eyes light up. Nisa could join the Honeybees and they could be best Bee friends. She's never had a best Bee friend before! And on top of it, this is a golden opportunity to be the first in her troop to earn the Ambassador Badge!!!

But when Nisa hesitates at Bessie's overtures—even after Bessie has told her all about the myth of the Mighty Bee—Bessie plays her trump card. What if Bessie teaches Nisa how to be cool in America? This strikes a chord and we begin a sequence of very misguided attempts by Bessie to show Nisa how to act cool. The next day, when Bessie shows up at the troop meeting with Nisa in tow, ready to collect the Ambassador Badge, her new friend acts so bizarre (thinking she's being 'cool') that Portia—who's dying to snag the Ambassador Badge for herself—warns Nisa that Bessie Higgenbottom is going to turn her into a total dweeb. Mad at Bessie for splashing her with geek, Nisa storms off with her "new best friends."

A crushed Bessie retreats to the Hive (her wildly elaborate sidewalk fort) with Ben and Finger. As she replaces some popsicle sticks on the leaking roof, she sadly wonders why she bothers keeping up the place when she doesn't even have a best friend to share it with. The guys, naturally, are a little insulted. "I know you'll never leave my side, Finger," Bessie sighs, "but I need at least one friend who can talk and isn't a boy. No offense." Meanwhile, over at Portia's Penny and Nisa sit on a canopied bed watching Portia brush her hair in the mirror. Nisa is bored out of her mind and quietly slips out the door. A little later, she shows up at the Hive to tell Bessie that even if she can be "very embarrassing," she's way more fun than those other girls. She officially accepts her offer of best friendship. "You won't regret this!" Bessie cries. The girls leap to high-five and, on that, fall through the fort roof.

Monster 'Stache

At a troop meeting one day, Portia peers into Bessie's face and gasps, laughing. "YOU HAVE A MOUSTACHE!" Penny points and laughs, too. Nisa looks at all of them, confused about what's going on. Portia whips out a magnifying mirror and sticks it in Bessie's face. Bessie looks and to her horror, there is a teeny tiny…MOUSTACHE! It's faint, but it's there. What?!? Girls don't have moustaches!

Portia teases her mercilessly for being "half boy" and Bessie flees the meeting for the Hive where she does everything she can think of to get rid of the horrible moustache. Finger keeps trying to tell her it's not that noticeable and leans in close to look at it. Bessie: "What do you mean, 'on second thought??'" She puts Scotch tape on it and rips (hair stays, red skin now highlights hair); she covers it with two band-aids; she tries on a turtleneck that comes way up past her lip. Finger vetoes all. Finally, she goes off to a barbershop and hops into a chair, next to a whole line of men. She begs the barber to shave off her moustache and he warns her that it will only grow in thicker. "JUST SHAVE IT!!!" He does and she peers into the mirror, happy. A beat and, right before her eyes, it grows back like a big bush on her face (This is just a quick visual gag.) "Now what I am I gonna do?!?"

She joins the Circus as the Bearded Lady and one day Nisa appears at her Cage. "Bessie. I have been looking for you. Ben said you joined the circus because you are very sad. What is wrong?" Bessie points to her face: "Isn't it obvious?" Nisa: "What?" "This! My moustache." "Oh. So what? I have, too." C.U. on Nisa's lip. She does indeed. She whips out a huge family album. "So does my mother and my aunt and my grandmother." Bessie pulls out the Honeybee Handbook, and turns to the last page where Miriam Breedlove smiles from the book jacket. Nisa hands her a magnifying glass and there it is! Miriam has one, too!!! This changes everything!

The girls go home and decide to play up their 'staches. They curl them, put mascara on them and comb them out a bunch of different styles. They're loving themselves! Later at the Rec Center, Portia makes fun of them, but Bessie and Nisa are so confident, it's catching. Suddenly, all the kids, plus people all over town, are celebrating their 'staches, big and small, and, one by one, they join a moustache-proud musical dance number! Portia is literally the only one in the Park who doesn't have even the faintest trace of moustache. A c.u. of her skin reveals a smooth plastic Barbie surface. She huddles all alone, crying, "Don't hate me because I'm beautiful!" Bessie sees her miserable face, and she can't stand it: She grabs Portia, draws a moustache on her and Portia's eyes light up. She jumps in with everybody and happily does the 'Stache. It's kid relatable and you can dance to it!

So Happy Together

Bessie arrives at her troop meeting to see Portia showing off her new awful pointy-faced little dog to everyone in the troop. Bessie runs up to her, all excited. "A PUPPY!" Portia: "She's a *dog*, Bessie." But Bessie's gone, kissing and petting her. Portia snatches her dog away. "Leave her alone, Bessie! She's *pure-bred*. I'm training her for her first dog show." Bessie gasps. "A dog show! Where you get to teach her tricks and everything?" Portia nods snootily. Bessie realizes that more than anything in the world she wants a dog, too. But instead of buying a dog like Portia, Bessie decides this is the perfect chance to get her Animal Rescue Badge.

Bessie goes down to the Wharf the very next day to look for a dog but when she sees all the 'homeless' seals sitting on the rocks, her heart melts. Nobody ever thinks about the seals." She calls out to them, as she weaves a lanyard and attaches it to a tire. Several yards away, Happy, a bohemian mutt with a torn ear, lounges with his fellow nomads and spots her. What the—? Back on Bessie who throws the 'lifeboat' out to the seals, only to fall in herself. Happy jumps up and dashes to her, fishing her out of the water. Bessie smothers him with kisses and throws a collar around his neck. "I guess I was meant to get a dog today! I'm going to call you Happy! Because now you'll have a happy home!" Happy, meanwhile, can't believe he got 'collared' when he was only trying to help.

Back at the Hive, Bessie bathes Happy, feeds him and immediately starts to train him. But Happy refuses to do any tricks and looks as bored as can be. Bessie's too blissed out to notice at first—"You're the best dog in the whole world and I just know you're gonna do great in the show tomorrow!"—but by the time they arrive at the Dog Show, Happy plants himself and gives a very loud, sad howl. Bessie gets it: "You really hate this, huh, Happy? I'm sorry, boy! You don't have to perform." She gives him the "surprise" she was saving for him—a homemade dog biscuit—and for the first time Happy regards Bessie with pure love. As they leave, they run into Portia carrying her icky dog: "She looks so pretty, Portia!" Portia says she wishes she could say the same for "that mutt." Happy's torn ear stands up and he narrows his eyes at the stupid Chihuahua. Bessie: "Well, Happy's not gonna be in the show anyway." Happy suddenly barks and hops up on Bessie's knee, nodding his head and wagging his tail. He <u>does</u> want to be in the show! The audience oohs and aahs equally over the dogs' tricks, and the Judge declares a tie. But when the Judge ask Bessie for her dog's papers, she proudly says, "He's a mutt. He rescued me!" What?!? She tells his heroic tale, but the Judge says that they must go with Portia's pure-bred. He examines the Chihuahua's teeth and suddenly SHRIEKS. "That's not a dog, it's a RAT!!!" The beast jumps out of Portia's arms and runs. She faints! Cut to Bessie and Happy joyfully playing with his new gold prize Frisbee. Across the street, Portia's "pure-bred" runs into a gutter and we IRIS OUT on its beady pink eye.

A Sticky Situation

It's taffy-selling season once again and inside the Hive, Bessie gives Ben and Nisa an elaborate presentation of her sales strategy this year (completely with pie charts, line graphs and a color-coded sector map of San Francisco) designed to break her own world record from last year. In the window, we see Penny's head pop up. She's spying for Portia, taking notes on Bessie's strategy. Later that day, Bessie, Ben and Nisa walk briskly up to the first house on their list when they see Portia and Penny already at the front door! Bessie soldiers on, of course, but at every house she turns up, she is informed that they've already bought taffy from that "cute little Portia Gibbons." Bessie can't sell a single box of taffy. She loses it.

On the way home, she bumps into Portia, who has sold, "4,988 boxes. How about you?" Bessie: (raspy) "None." Portia just smiles. (In the b.g. we can hear faint police sirens and the sounds of a car chase.) Bessie: (defeated) "How'd ya do it, Portia?" The car chase gets closer. Portia: "Easy. (yawn) I just sold to everybody." Bessie: "Everybody?" Portia: "Everybody." At that moment, a beat-up car screeches up and two Gangsters jump out carrying two bags of money and run into the house across the street. Bessie eyes them: "*Everybody?*" Portia: "They weren't home!" Bessie zooms across the street, with Finger trying to talk her out of it the whole way. She tells him she has to do this. She has to sell at least one box of taffy for her troop. Bessie runs inside and finds the Gangsters trying to hide their bags of money. "I'm Bessie Higgenbottom! Wanna buy some Honeybee taffy?" The Gangsters tell her to beat it, but no matter what they say or where they hide, she keeps showing up. Even when they turn on the faucet, Bessie comes out. (Meanwhile, the Police sirens are growing closer.) Finally, they can't take it anymore and beg her to go. "Whatever it takes, girlie!" Without missing a beat, Bessie replies: "Buy 4,989 boxes of taffy from me." As she starts to give a speech about the Honeybees, the desperate Robbers give up and hand over both bags of money—"Fine! Sold!"—and Bessie happily marches out the front door to the waiting Portia, Penny, Ben and Nisa. "I win! I win! 4,989 boxes of taffy! I win!" Pull out to reveal the Police are surrounding her. Bessie adjusts her glasses, confused.

Cut to a Press Conference in front of City Hall with the Police Chief and the Guhvana holding up a beaming Bessie: "This little Honeybee not only talked those Crooks into handing over their stolen loot, she broke her own taffy-selling record!!!" The Crowd cheers and Mary Frances smiles for the cameras as she awards Bessie the Taffy World Record Badge. Next to her, Portia starts to shrivel. Then the Guhvana announces, "Plus, Bessie gets this Honorary Police Badge." Portia shrivels some more. "Plus, we are donating a cash prize to her troop." "Plus, Bessie gets to go to Americaland with her friends." "Plus…" As Bessie and her friends whoop with joy, Portia finally turns into a raisin, and Happy eats her off the stage floor.

Hat Trick

As a Troop meeting wraps up, Bessie announces that in pursuit of Badge #630, the Ta Da! Badge, she is holding a magic show at the Hive the next day. She hopes everyone will come because Troop Leader Gibbons has to decide if Bessie has earned the Ta Da! badge based on audience applause. Bessie does a "sneak preview" card trick that fails miserably and Portia and Mary Frances smile at one another. The next day, Bessie rehearses at the Hive. None of her tricks work, Ben's furious with her for making him be her assistant (that's a girl job!) and is lying on the floor playing with an action figure in protest. Happy's miserable with rabbit ears attached to his head and is having visions of the good old days at the Wharf.

Moments later, while Bessie's in the middle of saying the magic hat spell completely wrong for the third time, we see Happy sneak off out the door while Bessie's eyes are squeezed shut. She opens them—"TA DA!"—and Happy is GONE!! Bessie thinks her trick worked!! Yay! But when she tries to make Happy reappear, it doesn't work! As she starts freaking out, we cut to the Wharf where Happy is excitedly roaming, looking for his old buddies. Back at the Hive, Portia and Penny show up early and Bessie frantically explains how she can't make her dog come back out of the hat. Portia: "*Really?* (yawns) Make me disappear and I'll go look for him." Bessie protests, but Portia insists on seeing what a great magician Bessie is. Bessie relents and, for the first time, she gets the spell totally right! In a puff of smoke, Portia vanishes for real! Suddenly, we hear from inside the magic top hat, Portia's furious voice. "Bessie Higgenbottom, what did you do to me? I'm stuck!!" Bessie promises to get her out. "Do you see my dog down there?" Portia screams she can't see anything and suddenly we hear the sound of a trap door opening —SHWOOP!— and Portia shrieking as she falls through. Oh no! Now they're both lost, The show's about to start and Mary Frances will be here any minute.

On Penny flipping out, cut back to the Wharf where Happy is discovering that life down here isn't nearly as awesome as he remembered and thinking about Bessie's delicious dog biscuits. Back at the Hive, Mary Frances and a bunch of kids have shown up! As Bessie nervously takes the stage, Happy sneaks back in and Ben grabs him by the scruff. Moments later, her repentant dog appears on stage—YAY!—and nudges the top hat meaningfully. Bessie nods, carefully recites the hat spell and Happy vanishes. We hear faint barking as he goes into the hat, then the 'trap door' sound again. But this time it doesn't close and we hear Portia yelling "shut" and "door!" amid big gusts of wind as Happy barks. Whoosh!! Suddenly, tons of pigeons and rabbits—plus, a crusty old man—start flying out of the top hat for the thrilled Hive audience. A final whoosh and out pops Portia! And then Happy! The kids give Bessie a standing ovation, clapping and screaming. On a slack-jawed Mary Frances handing over the badge and Bessie yelling "Ta Da! Ta Da!" we IRIS OUT.

Forest Follies

Every summer the Honeybees go on their annual Campout. And every summer Bessie gets too scared to stay all night in the woods and has to call her mom to come get her. But this year, Bessie swears as she packs an elaborate trunk, is going to be different. This year she's going to spend the whole night in the woods (no matter what scary sounds she hears outside her tent) and finally snag the Camping Queen badge—a basic badge that everyone has but her. As Bessie climbs onto the bus with the rest of the troop (driven by Mary Frances in head-to-toe khaki) she is determined to tough it out. Her reputation is at stake.

Portia, on the other hand, is determined to scare Bessie off, and begins finding little ways to frighten her from the second they arrive at the campground, from hiding a fake tarantula in her sleeping bag to popping out in a werewolf mask. Bessie's not budging, but the final round—campfire stories—is yet to come and Portia assures Penny that she's got a ghost story so scary Bessie will be rolling up her tent in no time.

But Bessie is prepared and she doesn't go down easy. Every time Portia adds another frightening detail or shines a flashlight in her own eyes, Bessie flinches but hangs on like a prizefighter (with a little coaching from Nisa). But Portia ends her scary tale with such a big bang that Bessie flat out loses it. Utterly terrified, she jumps up and zooms off, running as fast as she can toward her own tent—and then right past it into the woods! Cut back to Portia, who is actually a little sheepish. "Oops. I guess I scared her <u>too</u> good." The Girls, with Nisa in tow, start very tentatively into the woods to look for Bessie with one measly little flashlight.

Back on Bessie tearing through the forest and running smack into a redwood tree. She screams and spins like a top, round and round, until she stops and looks up. It dawns on her: It's just a tree. She listens, and hears the mellow melodic sounds of the forest at night. She starts to smile as she realizes there is nothing to fear.

Cut back to the Girls who get more and more lost and more and more scared as details from Portia's story start to haunt them. Every rustle, every cricket makes them jump screaming. Portia's crying just from the horror of walking so far. After a series of silly fright gags, an imposing shadow falls over the huddled girls, who look bug-eyed when he says, "AHHHH…" The Girls shriek and we cut to a burly hippie Park Ranger who finishes his sentence, "…Here they are, Bessie! I found them just where your special compass there said they were." Bessie (waving Finger): "Thanks, Ranger Jones!" And with that, she sees the first ray of morning sunlight. She made it through the night!!! On Portia quivering so hard she shatters into little pieces, we IRIS OUT.

Creator Biographies

AMY POEHLER, who just wrapped her fourth season on "Saturday Night Live," began her first season as a featured player and was upped to repertory cast in January 2002. This season she took over the co-anchor seat opposite Tina Fey on "Weekend Update." Known for her outrageous characters, Poehler has played the combative wife of Chris Kattan's science-loving trailer park husband, "Amber" the one-legged contestant on "DisMissed" and has done memorable impressions of Kelly Ripa, Avril Lavigne, Sharon Osbourne, Hillary Clinton, Sharon Stone and Michael Jackson.

Poehler joined the SNL cast from the Upright Citizens Brigade, a sketch/improv troup originally formed in Chicago. The UCB had a sketch show on Comedy Central for three seasons on which she was both a writer and performer. In addition, they opened a theater currently regarded as the premiere sketch/improv comedy venue in New York City.

She was recently seen in the hit comedy "Mean Girls" opposite Lindsay Lohan and Tina Fey. Other credits include: "Envy," "Deuce Bigalow: Male Gigolo," "Wet Hot American Summer," and the forthcoming "Mr. Woodcock." Poehler has made memorable appearances on television including "Late Night with Conan O'Brien" (as recurring character "Stacey," Andy Richter's little sister), "Arrested Development" (playing the wife to her real-life husband Will Arnett) and "Undeclared."

CYNTHIA TRUE has written for a number of shows including "Ned's Declassified School Survival Guide," "My Life as a Teenage Robot," "O'Grady High," "Johnny Test," and "Disney's Katbot." She was recently a staff writer for "The Fairly OddParents."

Prior to starting a career in t.v. writing, True was an author and journalist. Her first book, a biography of the late comedian Bill Hicks called "American Scream," was published by HarperCollins and Macmillan UK in 2002. In the UK, it is in its seventh printing and True has produced live events about Hicks for HBO's US Comedy Arts Festival and the Just For Laughs International Comedy Festival.

Previously, True was a magazine editor for Time Out NY where she wrote a weekly column about comedy, Mademoiselle and Harper's Bazaar. She has been a contributing editor at Glamour and Cosmo and has written reported features, essays and humor pieces for Rolling Stone, Bazaar, Time Out NY and Texas Monthly.

ERIK WIESE is an Emmy and Annie-nominated storyboard artist and writer who has worked on "Spongebob Squarepants" for four seasons, beginning with his character development and design for the pilot.

Wiese's other credits include "The Spongebob Squarepants Movie" (storyboard artist, animator), "Danny Phantom" (lead storyboard artist), "Samurai Jack" (writer and board artist, including the Emmy-winning episode "Birth of Evil"), "Sammy" (director), the animated Bjork video for "I Miss You" and commercials for Old Navy and Nike (animator, assistant director.)